

Rabshakeh's Proposals

Considered,

In a

S E R M O N,

Delivered at Groton

February 21, 1775.

At the Desire of the Officers of the  
Companies of Minute Men in that  
Town.

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By

SAMUEL WEBSTER, A. M.

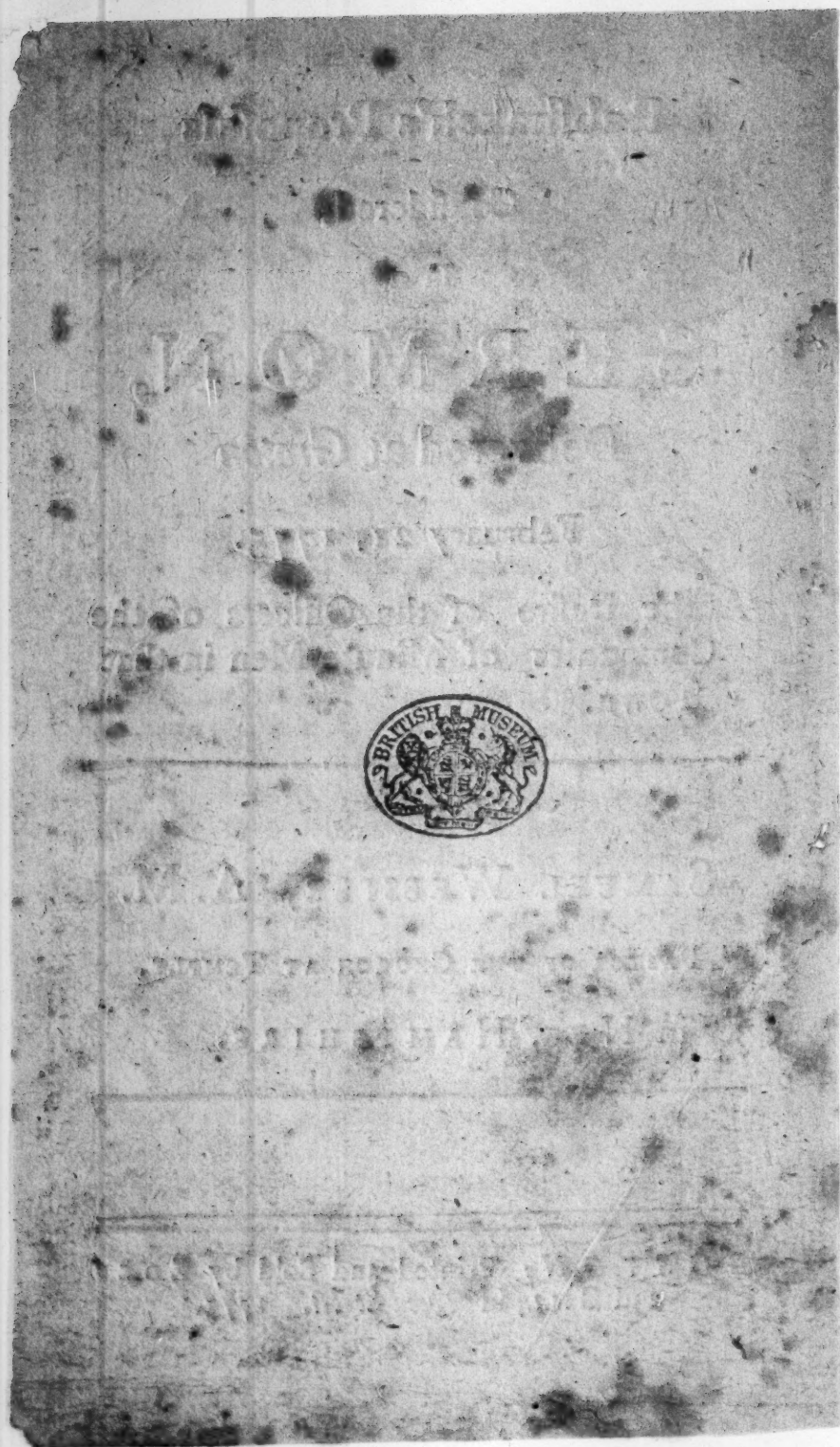
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH AT TEMPLE,

in NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

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A  
S E R M O N.

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2. K I N G S. XVIII. 30—32.

*Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, the Lord will surely deliver us, and this City shall not be delivered into the hand of the King of Assyria. Hearken not unto Hezekiah: For thus saith the King of Assyria, make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern; Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oyl olive, and of honey, that ye may live and not die: And hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying the Lord will deliver us.*

**T**WO ways, from the word of God, may we learn the mind of God and his counsel to us—either from what God enjoins or from what his people under such circumstances have practiced, or by what Satan and his instruments would dissuade us from or persuade us to,—and by the last, often, with the same evidence as by the first; as Satan and his instruments, according to their measure of power and craft, are always engaged in endeavours to keep us from the right ways of the Lord, and lead

us



us into evil; and as, in proportion to the evil, they ever proportion their desires and endeavours to lead us into it. Satan is well pleased to throw Job into outward distresses; but he would be more pleased if, by this means, he may conquer his virtue and induce him to blaspheme his maker, as far the greater evil.—In a word, as God is ever doing good and persuading us to obey and follow him, as the greatest good, so is Satan, and so, according to their measure, are Satan's instruments, doing us evil, and, "like Lions seeking whom they may devour," studying to keep us from God, and lead us, under various guises, to sin the greatest evil, and to all other evil according as it is evil.

Thus, in the passage before us, does a servant of the King of Assyria, an eminent emblem of Lucifer, in obedience to his master, endeavour to lead the Jews to the greatest evil, even to cast off their trust in God and regard to his servants, and persuade them to a surrender of their *earthly all* to the mere will of his master. For this purpose he uses many sounding but unmeaning promises, and mixes with them the most imperious threatenings.

He tells them that he come from the great King of Assyria—boasts of what his master had done—and would persuade them that it would be no loss to them to submit—and that it was in vain to trust in either God or man for help against such a power. Hezekiah, a servant of God, and they that were with him, would persuade the Jews not to submit that tho' their enemies were indeed strong, yet the Lord was mightier—and that agreeable to his wanted righteousness and mercy, they might in a humble obedient regard to him,  
yet



yet hope in the Lord. Satan therefore puts Rabshakeh on urging the little disadvantage and absolute necessity of submission and dissuading them from a trust in God, which he most dreaded, as knowing that their safety must chiefly depend on this.

Let us consider,

I. The nature and importance of a true trust in God—from which Rabshakeh would dissuade the Jews.

II. The nature of the proposals which Rabshakeh makes to the Jews.

III. The motives, addressed to their hopes and fears, by which he enforces these proposals.

IV. The applicableness of this—to the temptations of Satan in general, or to the situation of this land in particular.

I. Let us attempt some view of the nature and importance of a true trust in God—from which Rabshakeh would dissuade the Jews.

“Trust in the Lord with all thy heart,” saith true wisdom—trust in the Lord at all times saith a servant of God; “trust not in the Lord,” saith an instrument of Satan. Both express its importance. God knows its entire suitableness, and therefore commends it. His servants know its worth, and therefore heartily recommend it. Satan is well apprised of the danger from it to his interest, and therefore does his utmost to prevent it. Its importance is sealed by the pains God takes to promote and secure this trust, in the display of divine power, wisdom, sufficiency and faithfulness, in the works, word, and providence of God;—and by all the wiles of Satan, from his grand success with our first parents, through all the temptations he uses with the children of men—

In

In all of which, the success of his most dangerous attempts on mankind have ever depended on his keeping out of view, or leading the soul to distrust the divine power, wisdom, holiness, or sufficiency.

If in addition to this, we remember the blessed advantages of *trusting in God*—that “they that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion”, and on the other hand, the awful doom of the fearful and unbelieving; it may well induce, even the careless mind to enquire something about its nature, and dispose all to look to the foundation of their confidence.

Let us employ a few thoughts on the general nature of trust—the distinguishing nature of trust in God—and the principle exercises of this trust.

1. Let us think a little of the general nature of trust.—’Tis then a quieting regard to the ability, love, wisdom, or faithfulness of any being; exercising which, the soul so far rests, as a building on its foundation. Or it is the expectation of some particular, general, or supreme good from the object on which the soul leans, as suitable to afford the expected support. ’Tis then a reasonable and right confidence when only that is expected which the object, on which the soul, either partially or fully leans, is fitted to afford, by power, situation, or will, that which is expected. Thus, in animate things, we trust in a staff to support us. We trust in wholesome food to nourish us—we expect shelter from the rain in a sufficient house—a good crop from a fertile soil, and warmth, usually, from clothes.

So in things animate, we expect, usually, labour from the ox; swiftness from the horse.

So in rational beings—we trust in the wise for direction—the faithful that they will speak the truth—the holy and righteous that they will set us a good example.—And in a degree, we always trust in the good, the faithful, the rich, the wise, for help, support, comfort, or needful counsel.

Trust is thus allied to expectation ; but ever distinguished from it, in that we expect evil as well as good, but we never trust in any object for apprehended evil. Trust is also nearly related to hope ; but—ever distinguished from it, as seeing and travelling towards a firm rock are distinguished from leaning or standing, and depending upon the stability of that rock.

Hope is desiring and expecting some good viewed as at a distance. Trust is delighting in, and leaning upon, and expecting the continuance of some good viewed as present. Expectation shall be swallowed up ;—hope exchanged ; but trust in the supreme good shall ever remain with the holy.

Trust may differ in degree, and in its objects ; but it has still the same general nature, even when there is much uncertainty ; as in our regard to the testimony of a person of a doubtful character, so long as there is any expectation of that for which we trust in the object.—Then only does it quite vanish, when all the apprehended grounds of trust vanish—when the staff breaks—the rock sinks—the house is broken up—the harvest is quite blasted ;—or, in general, when that comes which quite removes the ground of our trust ; a case which the disciples were ready to think had happened, when after the death of Christ they say, “ we trusted that it was he that should have delivered Israel.”



Thus far the trust in general.—With regard to the distinguishing nature of trust in God, we observe—'Tis an entire persuasion of the sufficiency of his power, wisdom, holiness, and goodness, which quiets, animates, and regulates the soul, and warms it into a serene calm, and healthy exercise of all its powers for God;—or it is a regard to this glorious object according to its glorious nature.

Of consequence there is a two fold foundation of a right holy trust in God—the unchangeable glories of God—and a right relish in our hearts.

The foundation in God is what God is and has done. Here, assuredly, there is the most perfect foundation of trust.

Do we expect that a rock will support us. "The Lord is a rock". His power formed and upholds the known and unknown worlds. Unshaken and secure in himself, though the weight of worlds lies on him, yet he supports them all with infinite ease, as the massy rock the little dust.

Do we place confidence in the counsels and directions of the wise? Behold,—“the only wise God”, compared with whom the knowledge and wisdom of men and angels is but folly. Does he counsel and direct us? He cannot be mistaken. Shall we not trust to his counsels and rely on his directions? Shall our hearts venture a single movement, as doubtful whether it is infinitely safest and best for us to depend, and absolutely rely on his determination of our end, business, path, or happiness?

Do we trust that fellow creatures of approved fidelity will not deceive us? Shall we not, without wavering, trust that holy “God who cannot lie”?

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Do we often trust much to, and build much upon the goodness of a fellow creature? Shall we not trust the goodness of the Father of the Universe; that he will do towards us all, that which is, on the whole best? Do we expect much from a spark of goodness? Shall we not trust in goodness itself?

Do we trust much to the steadfastness of some among our fellow creatures? Shall we not intirely depend upon it that the unchangeable God will conduct like himself?

But now of these, and all his infinite glories God has given, and we may find complete evidence. His power crouds on our view in all we see and know, small and great "The heavens proclaim his glory", as their almighty builder. And earth has as many voices as inhabitants, or even as spires of grass, or particles of dust; to shout forth to every attentive ear "Lord God Almighty". His wisdom shines in all the harmony of creation.

His goodness mildly, but brightly beams forth in all the avenues for the objects of our senses—in all the pleasing engagements and discoveries of reason and imagination—in all the evil prevented and good bestowed.

His Holiness shines in his law—is discovered by the awaken'd, and relish'd by the sanctified conscience.

His unchangeableness is the result of his other glories—and is strongly mark'd in the ordinances of heaven, and attested by the steady laws of nature.

His grace and promises are rich and large—in harmony with himself, and adopted to remove those dreadful bars that sin and guilt had thrown in the way.

Thus

Thus is there a foundation in God, large and firm enough to secure the trust of all those whose hearts are prepared to see and acknowledge God.

But tho' there is infinite reason, in what God is and does, for entire trust in him ; yet, plainly, many "trust not in the living God". Many forget God, or, "thro' pride of countenance will not seek him". Many have no conformity to his image, concern about his favour, or regard to his Son ; or feel sensible opposition and aversion, directly opposite to trust. There must then be a belief of the divine Being and Perfections.

We may be supported by we know not what : But we cannot trust in that of which we have no knowledge. We often mistake indeed, and in our trust in creatures generally, or universally, rather ; yet even here we trust in them as being sufficient ; and can no otherwise trust in any thing, than as thus apprehended by us.

Further,

There must be also a satisfaction in these perfections.

However grand and august our views of God's glories are ; yet we shall trust in them no otherwise than as we delight in them, or are pleased with them, either in themselves, or in some relation to us. But if, as is often the case, we trust in, or expect the continued exercise of the divine power and wisdom in confined respects, or for foreign reasons, as—upholding and directing the sun, rain, and all those things which are agreeable to us : yet this is rather a secondary trust ; since, with our regard to these inferior objects, our trust ceases ;—as we cease to regard a particular instrument when its use is gone. Such a secondary trust in God we may have, and often have, while



' a large view of the divine power and wisdom in upholding and governing, directing and enforcing, are painful to us. We trust no further than we are pleased with these glories. Even he that vainly thinks that these perfections shall be to his eternal benefit; yet he trusts not in them, so long as he does not relish the direction of the divine wisdom, and dictates of the divine authority in the law of God. This has to his view no perfect wisdom; and therefore he ever contrives some way to cast it aside. In order to this trust, an holy relish of soul is necessary.

As this relish is not universal or natural to mankind, it is necessary, in order to trust in God, that we be "born again"—renewed in the temper of our hearts, or have a "new heart". We must be broken off from our vain confidence in the creature and ourselves—our own strength, wisdom, and righteousness. For as God *looketh to the humble*; so only the humble can look to God in the exercise of a holy trust. So far as the heart fails of just views and sense of its own littleness and loathsomeness, or of an holy relish for the divine glories; so far must it fail of a right trust.

As to the principal exercises and effects of this trust, we can hint but briefly.

In general,—we say

A true trust in God quiets the soul. "He that trusts in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion". So again, says the Psalmist, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord". Though winds of fears and troubles blow, yet he is fixed, by an holy trust on the rock of ages. "I am", says the Psalmist, "like a green olive tree; for I trust in thy word". As some trees are green in winter, so this trust will cause  
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the soul to flourish even in the cold blasts of outward distress.—It prevents murmurings as its direct opposite.—It keeps us from crooked paths, as opposed to the wise and holy directions of God ; in which we trust as best.

This trust is *exercised*, principally and universally, in committing the soul and all its concerns to God for time and eternity—leaning on him as able and sufficient to uphold us.

This is actively expressed in various ways. 'Tis exercised in *prayer*. As saith the Psalmist, “trust in the Lord at all times, pour out your hearts before him”. It is directly expressed in praise ; in which the soul looks over, delights in, and rests upon the fulness of God. It is exercised in remembering past support, and in seeking future favours. It has much place in reading and studying the works and word of God—that we may know more of the glory, and learn the mind and will of God.

*Again.* As we are sinners, this trust is exercised in gospel repentance and faith—in hating sin, loathing ourselves, and lying low before God ; in all of which, so far as evangelical, the soul trusts in God, as being, directing, and doing all that which is right. In faith 'tis directly exercised in trusting to a crucified risen Saviour, as the image of the Father, the gift of his love, in whom are displayed, and by whom are established all the declarations of the divine authority, wisdom, holiness, and love, in the works and law of God. Thus does this trust imply, and furnish the soul for the exercise of true love to God and his creatures.

Of consequence *Lastly*—this trust flows forth in obedience to the commands of God. Why are any disobedient ; when there is such infinite reason

reason for obedience to God? God declares the universal cause in the case of Israel—"She obeyed not my voice; *She trusted not in the Lord*". Do we trust in God? We just so far believe and feel the reality of his being, and the perfection and desirableness of his authority. Do we trust that God's directions are safe and best? We are, just so far, impelled to walk in the paths, and use the methods and means—his authority and wisdom point out.

This is, I think, some sketch of a true trust in God:—that trust, from which Rabshakeh would dissuade the Jews.—And well he might. For so far as they trusted in God, they built on that which infinitely sunk his master. Did they trust in the divine power, as sufficient? Where are his proud questions, "Who is your God, that he should deliver you out of the hand of my master"? Did they trust in the divine wisdom? Where are his and his master's crafty designs? Did they trust in the divine righteousness and mercy, to vindicate their cause against an unjust and cruel invader? It sinks his master and himself into monsters, mere beasts of prey. Well might he then desire to prevent this trust, which effectually barr'd all his proposals to them.

Let us briefly view

2. The nature of the proposals which Rabshakeh makes to the Jews.

As he eagerly dissuades them from trusting God; so he warmly presses them to trust him and his master.

He proposes then to the Jews to "make an agreement with him by a present". This is an easy way of ending a great difficulty—if the *present* be not too large. What sort of a *present* must



must this needs be that would satisfy him? Affuredly, nothing short of an entire submission. Nothing short of *presenting* their estates to his will—to be used as he thought proper;—their bodies to his service, and their religion to this regulation—so far, at least, as to acknowledge that there was no God like the King of Assyria. A present indeed this! He is willing to compliment them so far, if they will make this entire submission, as to call it a present.—But have we not mistaken him? would he be contented with no present short of this? plainly, he would not. 'Tis ever included in entire unreserved submission—tho' called by the soft name of a present. And, as very decisive evidence, we are just before informed that Hezekiah had *given* his master “all the silver found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the Kings house”. But this was not enough. Still the call is for a *present*—as long as there is any thing left to *present*. For no *present*—they could send would answer: But they must “come out”, and present it, and themselves along with it; or else it would never satisfy this horse-leech, crying, “give, give”.

Let us take notice,

3. Of the motives, addressed to their hopes and fears, by which he enforces these proposals.

There needed assuredly, some very important reasons to enforce such proposals as these. Rabshakeh has the reasons ready to assign.

He tells them that if they will make an unreserved submission—presenting themselves and their all to him,—he will engage, and surely they may believe him, after he has prevailed on them to distrust God,—that he will present back again to them enough of their own for them to live

live comfortably upon, and ensure to them the quiet enjoyment of it. They shall "eat", at least as long as his master in his wisdom thought best, "every man of his own vine; and every one of his fig tree, and drink every one the water of his cistern": Which they were sensible, was the very manner in which their God used to speak of blessing them.—They should plant and sow, and have enough for their subsistence at harvest, and his word for their security from their enemies on all sides. They should enjoy all this in as great a degree, and as long, as the great King of Assyria thought best. And, surely, this must be safer for them, than to be left to their own judgment in disposing of, and their own strength in defending themselves and substance. He engages that they shall be dressers of their own fields and vineyards—for a season; and that if the great King of Assyria thought best in his wisdom, after a time, to remove them to some other parts of his dominions, yet, he engages that they should be carried to a land as good as their own, and of the same kind; where they should enjoy all needful food, drink and cloathing in the cultivation of the country: And as this was all they could reasonably desire, their case must needs be far better to enjoy these under the security of such a wise, great, and good King as his master.

Thus far, he addresses their hopes. But, now, to fasten, and give force to, the reasons for the proposed submission,—he attacks their fears,—and tells them that, if they will not submit, die they must, and die they shall—that there was no way for them to preserve their lives—no way that they might "live and not die", but accepting his offers;—for neither God or man would

or could defend them.—He makes the proposals in mere compassion to them, before he strikes the fatal blow ;—which in the name, and armed with the strength of his master, he shall immediately deal out to them, unless they immediately comply with his just and merciful proposals.—And now what will they do, “ that he may give answer to him that sent him” ? Will they submit and live, and live comfortably, or die miserably ?

Let us view a little,

4. The applicableness of this to the temptations of Satan, in general,—or the situation of this land in particular.

As to the applicableness of this to the temptations of Satan, in general,—

This is what Satan has always attempted, and that in which he has had dreadful success, to prevent trust in God.

Thus did he attack, and thus, to the ruin of themselves and the whole family of mankind, did he succeed with our first parents.—From the nature and strictness of the command, arguing against the reality of it—“ yea hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden” :—And from the severity of the threatening, and the sensible, or imagined advantages of disobedience, pressing the conclusion, that the threatening was only a scarecrow ;—“ ye shall not surely die ; for God doth know that in the day ye eat, your eyes shall be opened”. In both, urging a distrust of the truth, faithfulness, wisdom, and goodness of God.—As if, though God would not be much displeased with their disobedience, yet he begrutch’d them the advantage they would gain by it. Thus has Satan conducted ever since. So long as he can keep out of view the power, presence, authority,



authority, wisdom, goodness, and holiness of God, or darken the soul's view and sense of them, so that they shall have on the mind only the force of doubtful conclusions ; so long has he easy access to the soul—to unhinge it from all desires, and endeavours to obey God, and, on the contrary, lead it by hopes and fears addressed to all the common springs of the soul, to trample on the divine commands, and give the sinful heart flowing reins. A soul, uninfluenced by trust in God, Satan easily persuades that in the ways of sin it shall find earthly ease and pleasure, the only things of importance when, and so far as the soul distrusts God,—that in this way it may enjoy riches and honour, gratify the senses, and “fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind”, and all without any disturbance or fear : or, that if any set of pleasures fail, others shall come to supply their places—that if the imagin'd pleasures of godliness fail, the pleasures of sin shall abound—far more to our relish—that if we are taken away, we shall, at least, enjoy ease, and may expect such good as suits us, if we survive death, so as to be capable of pain or pleasure. On the other hand, Satan persuades the soul, void of trust in God, that if it will not hearken to the counsel of lusts, there is present death to all comforts, in pleasing ourselves, gratifying our lusts, and enjoying the good our heart relishes—and that it were as well to die, as to be deprived of the pleasures of sin, and come under the restraints, and walk in the glooms of religion.

In this, Satan ever succeeds, just so far as he can introduce distrust of the truth, holiness, or in general of the perfections of God.

So long as the soul firmly assents to the truth of God, and confides in his wisdom, and rests in  
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his sufficiency, Satan finds no opening to introduce his temptations—here he must and does begin, and here, alas, he has melancholly success.

As to the applicableness of this to the situation of this land in particular—We observe

1. Here is a mighty claim of Rabshakeh, in the name of the king of Assyria, that they, the Jews, should agree with him, submit, and present their earthly all to him and his service. Whence is then his right to this? It should seem that one of these three involve the best title that we can make out for him—

Either—that their father Abraham, from whom the Jews professed to descend, came from the land of Chaldea, and so was a subject of that empire; and of consequence they also, as descendants from him—or that not long before, under the reign of Ahaz, the Assyrian King had subdued the City of Damascus and kingdom of Syria, a neighbouring power, which had long been a scourge to the Jews—or, if this evidence were not complete, that the King of Assyria had some hundred thousand men, ready to prove, at the point of the sword, the argument full and unanswerable.

Thus the Parliament of Britain claim a right to us and ours in America—to do with us and ours as they shall think best,—with respect to life and property—all that which can come under the jurisdiction of any earthly power. They desire that we would agree with them in this,—and make them a present of ourselves and our earthly all, to be disposed of as they shall judge proper. They desire that we should yield their right to this: Or, in their own language, they claim, and insist on our yielding it to them that, “of right, they have power to bind the people of these colonies

nies by statutes *in all cases whatsoever*": And accordingly they are now attempting to enforce this claim.

Whence, now, arises this right ?

'Tis urged, that our fathers came from Britain, a century or two ago, and that, being subjects of Britain, before they came here, they, and their posterity, to all generations, must and ought to remain so.—Though it is observable, that if there is any force in this, 'tis either in a great measure lost by our fathers coming directly from another country, Holland, where they had long lived as subjects—or else the argument will recoil on themselves, and oblige them to this entire submission to the inhabitants of Asia, from whence, assuredly, their fathers came. But instead of this, they attempt to enslave them as well as us.

In addition to this, 'tis urged that Britain has defended and secured the Colonies—and lately conquered Canada, a neighbouring power, which had long been a scourge to us. For this service, without consulting us, they judge themselves entitled to the disposal of us, and our property. Although it might seem but fair, first to have stated *their* accounts, and desired *ours*, and proposed a fair reckoning, and then demanded the balance, if any due. Instead of which, they make the charge, prove their own accounts, and proceed to an attachment of us and our property, without allowing any appeal from their decision—although we, as well as the Jews, and all mankind, should be unwilling for a pretended creditor to be both judge and executioner ; and although much of their charge against us appears to us, and many among themselves, either groundless or much too high ; and although

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no credit be allowed us in balance of that part of their account which is reasonable.—If we ask, did Assyria conquer Canaan for Israel? The answer is no. Ask again; did Britain purchase or conquer America for our Fathers? The plain answer is no, they did not. The same God that conducted Israel into the land of Canaan, conducted, and in his providence, made way for our Fathers.—Enquire further, did Britain defend these Colonies in their infancy? The answer must still be no. But we are told, perhaps Britain would have defended us, if we had been attacked. We hear of no attempts to defend us in the only capital instance of designs against us. We are then informed these designs would have been multiplied and surely succeeded, had not fear of the power of Britain prevented. 'Tis hard to prove or disapprove this article of charge against us—If allow'd—and Britains claim in consequence; we are indebted—as a flock of sheep to wolves, that have secured them by their howlings, tho' without design, from foxes and small dogs, and then devour them for their pay—as, sure, no powers that would have attack'd us, would have aim'd at more than to do with us and ours as they should think best. But however this be—we are desired to remember that, lately, Britain has conquered Canada. Tho' here, the argument of the Assyrian king seems to have the advantage; as he conquered Damascus on some particular desires and submissions of Ahaz, and without any aid from him: whereas Britain conquered—with the fully proportion'd help of America, this Province in particular. Both agree in this—that both Assyria and Britain have retain'd the sovereignty and property to themselves.

But,

But, now, if from these two arguments, there is not a full conviction on our minds of our obligation to yield the point of right; Britain, as well as Assyria, has another argument at hand, which she supposes must produce conviction. She has and sends her fleets and armies, to prove every part of the argument, which might seem otherwise to fail.

This leads us to observe

2. The correspondence in the motives, urged by each to enforce their claims.

The offers made by Rabshakeh are that, if the Jews will agree with him, and submit to him, and make him a present of their *earthly all*, themselves and substance—they shall for a season, at least, have a subsistence, with his security, by their labour on their own.

Thus does Britain promise that, if we will part with the right, and peaceably submit—we shall, under such limits as they think fit, labour on our own, and enjoy as much of the fruit and benefit of our labour, as they shall see and judge best for us.—If we will submit as dutiful servants, they mean not to starve us, but to allow us as much food and cloathing as they judge we need: And, sure, they can judge as well or better than we. As to what we can earn, over and above this, as to be sure, we can make no good use of it, we may depend upon it, that they will use it wisely, but we need not enquire how.—Rabshakeh engages—till he sees fit, to come and remove them to some other part of the empire—as masters, we know, may wisely employ their servants, now in one, now in another part of their estates, as they judge proper.

Thus

Thus Britain begins to tell—of removing us from county to county, from province to province, or from America to Britain, as she sees best.

Further, to enforce his proposals, Rabshakeh threatens, and produces his forces ; and so does Britain.

Rabshakeh winds of with—" trust not in the Lord " : And Britain affects to despise our expectations of help from God or from man.

In conclusion,

We may see what is right for us to do in the present day.

The Jews submitted not—and, in his own time and way, the Lord delivered them.

They trusted in God ; and so may we—opposing the power of God to Britain's force ; his wisdom to their craft ; his righteousness to their injustice. Thus may we trust in the Lord, and yet hope in his mercy.

We hear not, indeed, how the Jews agreed in their refusals to submit. If, however, there were some, as generally in similar cases since, who were disposed to submit ; they were over-ruled in their false humility, or worse designs.

May we then, prizing the gifts of heaven, feeling our own unworthiness of them, and knowing whence our effectual help must come, study to preserve them—neither proudly trusting in our own strength and deserts, or, lazily and falsely, pretending trust in God ; while we neglect the open paths his providence points out.

In the 2d Chronicles 32d Chap.—where we have an account of this same affair, we are told that " Hezekiah and the people took counsel, and stopped the fountains of water without the city,



city, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land". This was, doubtless, an inconvenience to themselves—to be obliged, for themselves and cattle, to depend on the walls within the city. But they chose to submit to it, as the lesser evil—willing for a season to deny themselves of things *convenient*, that they might preserve things *necessary*—willing to use *probable means*, while they depended on God to apply those which were effectual. Had they submitted, or neglected obvious means, under the pretence of trusting God;—their trust would have contradicted itself.

Thus may we learn to do likewise. Many things are not *necessary* for us. But it is *necessary* for us to obey the voice of that God who hath said, "*if ye may be free use it rather*".

Let us then hearken to the voice of God—the calls of justice—the sighs of our land—the example of the wise and good—and in our respective spheres, endeavour to stop the waters that would please and strengthen the enemies of our souls, and of our country—the waters of contention, ungodliness, unkindness, and selfishness; which provoke God, oppose trust in him, and tend to our own ruin. Let us endeavour to do that faithfully, whatever self-denial it cost us, which demands our concurrence. Let us put ourselves under the protection of the universal King, and trust in him that Rabshakeh blasphemed, whose laws of justice, from the influence of designing men, Britain seems at present disposed to neglect.

Peaceable measures of opposition, if possible, humanity will dictate. Such measures, to the satisfaction of every benevolent mind, are proposed

sed by the late grand council of America, with the most desirable union—Measures which require but only self denial, or conquering ourselves—Measures, however, I add, which will effectually try the virtue and wisdom of America—which suppose a degree of both, that selfish minds can hardly believe any capable of. Our enemies know, that if these measures can't be defeated, they must and will defeat them. The various arts of selfish craft, to persuade us of the unlawfulness, or impracticability of them, and to sow dissensions and jealousies among us, we have seen exerted, and may further expect. But we are not sure they will stop here. We have seen some attempts to intimidate us; and hear many *sounding threatnings*. Troops, to the amount of thousands, stationed in the Capital of this Province; the general of the army appointed Governor of the Province; armed forces sent to stop a legal town meeting—and called off, obviously, only for want of strength to secure a retreat; a naval force in our principal Harbours; batteries erected at the entrance of our Capital; the loud noise of the enemies of their country, publishing for certain the speedy arrival of foreign troops, seconded by Canadians and Indians—in addition to the brutal threats of North that he would “lay America at his feet”—explain'd, by being taken out of the metaphor, to mean “obedience”, without reserve “to the mother country”, or, in plainer english, to himself the minister;—and this compared with the manifest readiness of the new Parliament to second, to the utmost of their power, the designs of the Minister—scarce leave us even feeble hopes, but from the unfearchable  
ways

ways of Providence, but that we must e'er long  
 "hear the sound of the trumpet, and the alarm  
 of war, and of garments rolled in blood".—  
 From the virtue of the minister we can hope  
 for nothing. To the utmost of his power we  
 have reason to fear. From the virtue of a na-  
 tion, so large a part of which have again sold  
 themselves to those that have heretofore mani-  
 fested their resolution to sell their country and  
 justice, we can expect but little. Luxury and  
 Selfishness, 'tis true, have their feelings. To  
 those feelings, in our commercial plan, we mean  
 to apply: But have little reason to think—the  
 crafty minister will chuse to hazard the event,  
 while master of the force of the nation.  
 From *foreign alliances*, always precarious, and fre-  
 quently mischievous, we have but little help to  
 expect.—Europe is, at length, again in peace.—  
 The sons of the north, the Russians, harden'd  
 by frost and rugged living; experienced of  
 late in a successful war; now at leisure;—we  
 are threatned,—shall try further campaigns in  
 the fields of America. Can the minister find  
 means to pay them; no doubt they may be  
 procured. Their sovereign is a tyrant—their-  
 selves slaves,—unacquainted with liberty, unless  
 by distant rumours, or feelings of *humanity*—  
 stifled in their birth by their slavish situation.  
 Worthy executioners of ministerial justice.

Shall we then be idle: when, under God,  
 we must depend only on our selves? Duty to  
 almighty God, who has commanded us "not  
 to be the servants of men", *forbids it*. Bene-  
 volence to mankind, who, in opposition to the  
 laws of nature and of God, are almost divi-  
 ded into the ignoble characters of tyrants and  
 slaves,



slaves, *forbids it*. Gratitude to the nation, that once taught us how to prize freedom, *forbids it*. Justice to our Fathers, who so dearly purchased the blessings for us, *forbids it*. Justice to ourselves and unborn millions, *forbids it*.

No doubt much is to be suffered, rather than enter on the horrors of war. But though the issue of war be ever doubtful : equal horrors of slavery are not doubtful.

If just Heaven should call us to the field ; we know not yet all the enemies we shall have to encounter. We are told—they will be, mostly or all, regular troops.

If large bodies act —'tis plainly necessary that there should be *some method* in which they may act together. No doubt *in this* there may be, and often is, as in clothing, mere finery distinct from use. But a steady series of facts prove, as well as the nature of the thing, that small comparative bodies of men, who know how to use their weapons, and act together, and support one another—have ever been, in a long contest, far-superior to those who have rushed on, without any thing but accidental support from one another.—Witness, among a multitude of other instances, the late success of a small part of the force of Britain, in the hands of the East-India Company, against a people as numerous as the inhabitants of these Colonies. Thus, also, the Russians, who have lately triumphed over the Turks, were, not long since in the largest numbers, the *sport* of the Swedes, their less numerous, but more expert neighbours.

Perhaps the time, necessary to attain the essentials, may not be long : but some attention and pains are surely necessary.

I think then we have reason to be thankful that a spirit for *military discipline* prevails so far in this and the neighbouring Provinces.—Tis pity there have been heats in *any* towns about the choice of Officers—we *hear* of none in this. There can be no rule in *prudentials*, where many are concern'd, but that the minority acquiesce. At this day 'tis particularly necessary. But I think we may safely say, that as great difficulties have arisen where Officers have been appointed in the old channel. Prudent faithful men will, however, be very cautious how they make a jarr, where so much depends on union.

Some, and we hear a large proportion in this town, have engaged, agreeable to the plan of the Provincial Council, to hold yourselves in particular readiness to act in the service of your Country. The friends and enemies of your Country are much interested in your conduct.—'Tis to be hoped and expected that you will keep the grand question in view—*are Americans the slaves of Britons? If they are*, your conduct with that of America, is Treason, Rebellion and all that sober men ought to avoid. *If they are not*—avoid this servitude faith God.—avoid it say justice, conscience and interest.—Oppose it in the most effectual manner faith prudence That we should be bound by them *in all cases whatsoever*, is the unbounded claim and steady pursuit of Briton.—They tell us of millions of masters—the single slave finds it difficult to serve one.—But they, and their assistants among us, who seem generally to expect to be *drivers*, or to be very much favour'd in their task, are all earnest to persuade us that we shall find the best of masters, if we will submit. But this is but  
*cold*

if true.—I am told that the Negroes, when brought from Africa—have often, or generally greater promises.

My friends, I wish you, and your country wishes you calmness of judgment and firmness in conduct.

The times call for particular industry in acquiring necessary military skill.—You have chosen your Officers:—we hope you will pay them a decent and necessary respect—silence and attention, are, I think essentials, without which no orders can be regarded.

If you endeavour to equal the regulars in the exactness of their motions—none, I hope will attempt to equal or compare with them in *prophaneness and tipling*. The courage they hereby gain to destroy costly furniture, and abuse those that are sober, will scarcely prove them quite invincible.

My friends, though I am not able to assure you of all the events of our present controversies—yet sure I am that you are called, in common with the rest of the world, to a contest in which you must conquer or die eternally—my highest warmest wish for you is, that you may put on the christian armour, “and fight the good fight of faith”—and then, if call’d to risk, or even lose your lives in the service of your country—you shall assuredly triumph—in death ye shall conquer—and, beyond the dark valley, in the service of that God whose *exclusive* prerogative it is to bind “in all cases whatsoever”,—in a world where universal love is the universal law, and vain ambition finds no admittance,—ye shall enjoy the noblest.

E I N I S.

